

# LETTERS FROM CAMP

Fevrier 1994

"Les Versants Cachés"

Volume 1 Numéro 2

## REVIEWS

### Honesty; it's all in the velvet

Sarah Bowles

Imagine the least pretentious art exhibit you've seen recently. It's a safe bet there isn't one. Honesty and even clear themes in pieces are often difficult to detect. Subterfuge and self-righteous posturing seem to be standard.

Shira Spector's "A Girl is Like Velvet," formerly on display at Concordia's VA gallery, shocks not because of its content, but because of its incredible honesty. Being thoroughly aware of a human presence behind an art work is unusual. A Girl is like Velvet is like having a wonderful conversation with a very secure and very funny friend; the sort of thing that leaves you grinning for hours.

Spector uses vibrantly dyed fabrics, appliquéd fun fur (when was the last time you saw fun fur?), garish prints and handmade papers as her media. Textile work has never looked so inviting.

With titles such as "Nichola came out in high school," "Sophie didn't think it was such a big deal," "But once I kissed my pillow," "A Girl is like velvet, by all means, caress her," and "Seven years you've been dead and there is still food for me in your kitchen," and with poems and comments strewn over her work, Spector creates a confessional, communicative and comfortable environment. The quilts and quilted cottons, replete with an abundance of cartoon characters and bright colours remind one of the joy of giggling over Saturday morning cartoons when young.

Indeed, youthful recollections and adults musing over their significance are the basis for several pieces. "Storybook, in progress," consists of orange, red, blue, and purple hand-made paper pages, each covered with cutouts: Little girls in tutus, Spector's portrait image of herself as a blobby green monster covered with twinkling eyeballs, a horrendous, hard-to-please ballet teacher. Spector recreates the joy of sitting in the dark



will ever kiss her, and she will be in torment for her entire life.

"A Girl is like velvet, by all means caress her," continues the expression of her torment over coming out; attempting to define her "quirk" of liking women in the context of heterosexuality, while working toward the acceptance of her desire simply to be

"Girl 17 Decides she is queer", is a square of fabric covered with many perplexing cartoon girls, and one at the centre smiling, with a proud fist raised.

kissed by a woman with whom she is obsessed.

"Kristallnacht action," the most serious piece in the exhibit, is also the least viewer friendly. The emotional connection between the viewer and the work that develops because of the comforting use of textiles is abandoned in favour of cardboard and glass. The hesitancy felt on interacting with this work forces an examination of historical fact - the terror and violence experienced by Jews during and since the Holocaust.

Dealing with the process of self-acceptance through the examination of culture, sex, and sexual orientation, Spector makes an impression that lasts hours, a valuable one that is often ignored. Thank you bubbie Shira.

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A girl is like velvet

א מידל איז ווי סאמעט

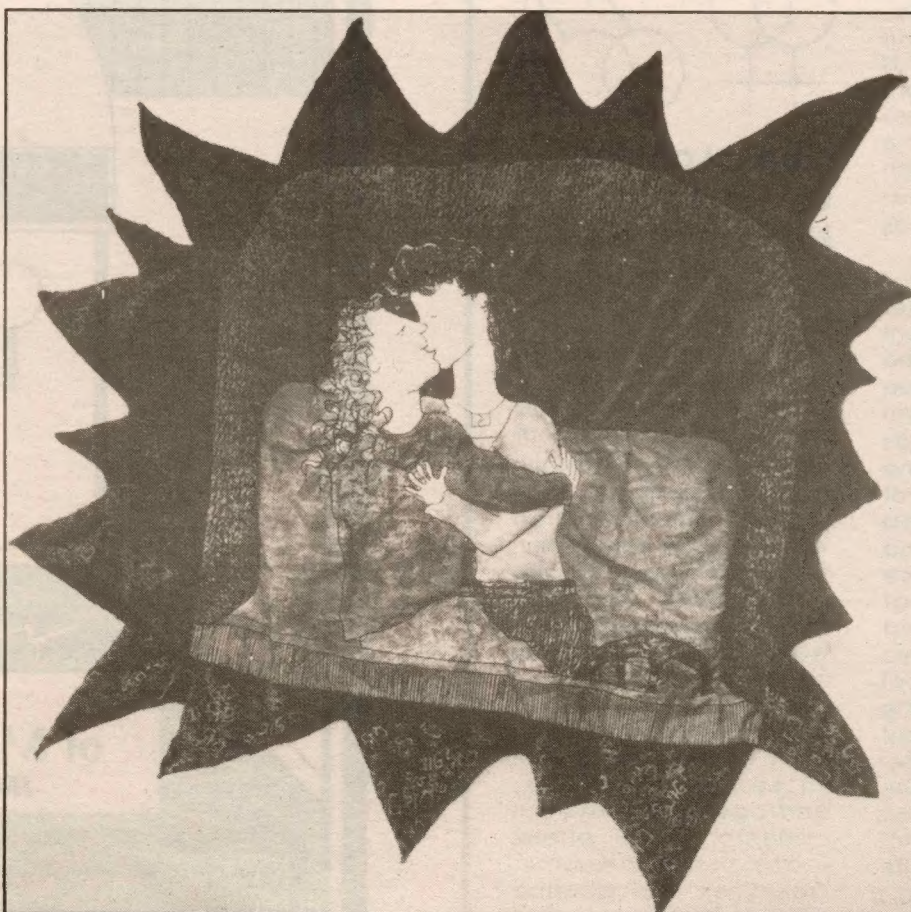
with one's bubbie, eating chocolate covered orange peels, watching the graceful professional ballerinas in the dark. The graceful images of "true" womanhood, women who were never mistaken for boys, even when they didn't wear dresses.

Spector examines herself, realizing she felt butch, and felt uncomfortable with her restraints.

"Seven Years you've been dead, and there is still food for me in your kitchen" deals with Spector's pondering whether her all-loving and comforting bubbie would have accepted her lesbianism. She examines its place in Jewish culture, like bagels, and fish dishes and the preconceived order of falling in love with a man. Text listing a variety of traditional dishes, and interspersed with declarations, explains that she too can love, even if her love object is a woman. The viewer is presented with a rosy-cheeked girl, head cocked sideways in thought, while in the background two women are holding each other close in amorous embrace.

"Girl 17 Decides She is Queer" is a square of fabric covered with many perplexing cartoon girls, and one at the centre smiling, with a proud fist raised. Text is arranged around the women declaring that no woman

photo: Hanna Voilcek



"A Girl is like Velvet" was on display at the VA gallery from January 9-15

LETTERS FROM CAMP  
produit par CQC

Le 1 Février 1994

Cher(es) Étudiant(es)

Il me fait plaisir de vous annoncer la publication mensuelle du journal gai "Letters from Camp", enfanté par Concordia Queer Collective. Notre premier exemplaire entièrement en anglais fit son apparition au début du mois de décembre. L'un des buts des créateurs est la publication bilingue de celui-ci.

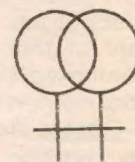
"Letters from Camp" ce veut un journal avanguardiste avec un esprit de collectivité. Par le fait même, nous vous offrons la possibilité de participer à notre journal par vos écrits (poèmes, lettres d'opinions, nouvelles, bandes dessinées, etc). Toutefois, nous nous réservons le droit de décider du contenu du journal.

Les soumissions sont acceptées entre le 15 et le 20 de chaque mois. Les soumissions dépassant 250 mots devront être mises sur disque McIntosh, exemptées d'erreurs grammaticales et d'orthographe.

En tant que coéditeur et représentant mes collègues, je vous remercie à l'avance de votre contribution au "Queer" journal.

Sincèrement Votre

David Crevier  
Éditeur Francophone



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Not Ashamed.  
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## Exotic? Think Again.

To whom it may concern,

The attached letter was sent to the Gazelle, a lesbian magazine that just began publishing in Montreal. It is a response to an extremely outwardly racist issue they put out. Whether the Gazelle publishes the letter, and takes steps to address their racism will depend very much on public outrage. You can help by publishing or distributing this letter unedited.

Yours in Struggle,  
Patrizia Tavormina.

December 10th, 1993

To the editor and the staff of the Gazelle,

When your editor called me in December as a contact person for lesbians of colour and other ethnic "minorities", who might be interested in appearing on the January cover of Gazelle, I was suspicious but kept an open mind. I had just returned to Montreal, and already I had heard in passing that one of your issues had racist overtones.

I questioned your editor about this. She was ignorant of the situation, but confirmed that there were no women of colour on the Gazelle staff. When I finally did see the past issues of Gazelle, I was shocked and horrified.

At the moment, I am fuming with anger mixed with disappointment and hopelessness over the racism in the October issue of Gazelle, and am choosing my words carefully. The magazine put together by a staff of white Quebecois writers completely distorted and degraded the existence and experiences of lesbians of colour and other marginalized ethnic groups. As for Jezebel Rothchild's article detailing her warped illusions about women of colour -- Jezebel if you want to toy with the exotic, try a new vibrator. Lesbians of colour are not white Quebecois or white Anglosaxon women's "exotic or foreign objects of desire". Nor are marginalized ethnic groups decorative ornaments to

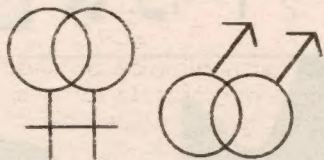
be placed solely on the cover of your magazine, as if that lays a claim to anti-racism. Some of the trash written was so humiliating and hurtful, I can't even begin to address it.

The Gazelle just began publishing as of September 1993, and while I search to find some good thoughts at the launching of another much-needed lesbian magazine in Montreal, I cannot. Such racism and ethnocentrist writing and attitudes have left many lesbians of Montreal bitter.

The Gazelle owes an official public apology to all of its readers stating exactly what steps you will take for change. If you truly believe in empowerment for all women, the Gazelle should restructure its policies and staff towards an active commitment against racism, heterosexism, classism and other realities of oppression.

I hope that you will find the strength and courage to take these words to heart, and open the channels for growth.

Patrizia Tavormina.



**Queer Looking,  
Queer Acting.  
Not Ashamed.**

January 17th, 1994

Dear Editors,

As a prejudiced gay white male, I felt the need to address and provoke discussion about an issue that seems to have been somewhat neglected: discrimination within the gay community. On several occasions in the past, I have witnessed male homosexuals--some were I must confess, my friends--passing derogatory remarks on or mocking other gay males solely on the basis of their falsetto voices, androgynous physical appearance, or effeminate mannerisms. Prejudices also abound within lesbian circles, and masculine "dykes" often become the target of harsh criticism.

For self-evident reasons, any despicably cruel, base and prejudicial behaviour emanating from our own gay community must be denounced and, to be sure, eradicated from and by the community itself. We will never counter and, ultimately, conquer the already quite oppressive, not to say dehumanizing, attitude of an all-too-powerful, predominately heterosexual society, if our own community is divided by intolerance and prejudice. Internal strife undermines any potentially effective group action and, in the end, render any attempt at assertiveness feckless. On its way to international acceptance and respect, gayness must march as one dignified human being.

Therefore, I take this opportunity to denounce one person: MYSELF. Yes, as a prejudiced gay white male, I have ridiculed and been even ashamed of some feminine "queens" for just being who they are. Now, I am still ashamed...but of myself. This written avowal was my comeuppance.

Alain Verreault.

# FEATURES



## It Ain't Ozzie & Harriet No More The New Kinds Of Families

Timothy Johnston

Nineteen-ninety-four is the International Year of the Family as declared by the General Assembly of the United Nations. The Canada Committee for the International Year of the Family 1994 was established in late 1992 with the aim "to stimulate awareness among Canadians of the importance of the Family to society and to our future success as a nation."<sup>1</sup>

A whole year devoted to the Family:


What does this mean to us queers? We fight daily against the Religious Right and their "Family Values." Is this "focus on the family" also a concerted attack on the queer community, the queer family? Am I paranoid?

We should take this opportunity to emphasise our family values; and to promote the need for the greater warmth, caring, security, togetherness, tolerance and acceptance that make a family the all-important value it is. These criteria are exactly what this "Year of the Family" is all about:

The emblem of the International year of the Family 1994 - a heart, sheltered by a roof and linked to another heart - symbolizes life and love in a home where one can find (guess what) warmth, caring, security, togetherness, tolerance and



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acceptance. The open design of the symbol is meant to suggest continuity but with a hint of uncertainty. The brush-stroke, with its open line roof, represents the complexity of the family.<sup>2</sup> Well, that's what all the fuss is about.

However, don't count on our friends in the Reform Party to run up and give us all a great big hug 'n' kiss. With the Vatican supporting discrimination against queers,<sup>3</sup> and the United Church's refusal to bless queer couples,<sup>4</sup> it is hard to believe that queers have managed to establish their own style of family and of family values. Yes, despite all these obstacles, we continue to push the edges of the envelope outward to include new definitions of what constitutes a family. Increasingly, queer women and men are asserting their rights to become parents or to remain parents. Couples are adopting, or making surrogate parenting agreements in order to fulfill their desire to raise children. Three years ago, the National Film Board of Canada produced a documentary, *A Kind of Family* (which premiered here at Concordia in the spring of 1992), about one gay man's struggle to adopt his foster son. Ground-breaking in its subject matter, it tells a story that has become more and more commonplace in the straight media. Queer families have existed since the dawn of time. How many of us know a queer with a child, or who wants to have a child? And, why stop at just one? There are an unknown number of lesbian womyn who are parents; there are an unknown number of lesbian couples with children; there are an unknown number of gay men who are similarly situated.<sup>5</sup>

Our relationships are valid. Just as we are whole persons, our relationships with our same gender spouses are whole and complete. Society has yet to realize this fact: Queers can and do live in committed relationships. The rising popularity of union ceremonies in the queer community is not just a trend to make a political statement (although each and every one is an act of defiance against the religious right). These couples are making a very sincere and, albeit, controversial statement of their love and commitment to each other. They are

bucking that age-old stereotype that queers fuck around. *Till Death do us part* has become an everyday utterance in contemporary queerdome. By making these declarations in public, we say to the world that we are people who love each other and are willing to face the whole load of baggage that comes with marriage. Spousal benefits and parental rights go hand in hand with spousal responsibilities and parental duties.<sup>6</sup>

Our parents also are becoming involved in our lives as queers. Sadly, it took a tragedy to wake Dorothy Hajdys to the problems and dangers that queers face. Her son, Allen Schindler, a sailor in the US navy was murdered by a fellow sailor at a base in Japan. Investigations proved it was a gay hate crime. Hajdys now campaigns for queer rights, including lifting the ban on queers in the military. She was asked by a reporter from *The Advocate* if she supported the idea of queer marriage. She responded:

All I ever wanted in my life was for my kids to be happy. And if that (marriage) would have made him (Allen) happy - I don't know. I can't really tell you. It wasn't until I was pushed into all this that I realized what homosexuality was all about. I'm still not sure if I understand it all, but I know Jim Jennings (Allen's lover) hurts as much as anybody else could hurt.<sup>7</sup>

The ambivalence of Hajdys' statement is remarkably representative of the kind of uneasiness found within queer communities over the assimilationist strategies of same sex couples who marry. However most queer rights activists do agree that the definition of family cannot be the traditional "Ozzie and Harriet" bullshit to which the Religious Right would have us aspire. Today's family consists of people who love, support and depend on each other; whether they live together or not; whether they are legally married or not; whether they have children or not; whether they are queer or not. All it takes is love for and a commitment to each other. Besides, "Hate is not a family value."<sup>8</sup>

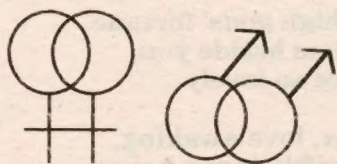
Happy Year of the Family, regardless of who (or what) constitutes your family. (We value our lesbian Mom)<sup>9</sup>

P. S. "Thanks Mom. Love the genes."

Sources:

1. BAKER-COWAN, Bonnie, "Behind the Scenes," Canadian Living, January 1994, p4.
2. *ibid.*

3. "Discrimination against gays OK: Vatican," The Montreal Gazette, 24 July 1992, pC11.
4. "United Church meeting denies its blessing to gay couples," Montreal Gazette, 25 May 1992.
5. BULL, Chris, "Till death do us part," The Advocate #643, 30 November 1993, pp40-47.
6. *ibid.*
7. Quoted in SCHOOF, Mark, "Life after death," The Advocate #633, 13 July 1993, pp32-38.
8. Available on a T-shirt from **Don't Panic! Designs Inc.**
9. Slogan on poster designed by Leif HARMSEN.
10. Available on a T-shirt from **Don't Panic! Designs Inc.**



## FONDATION D'AIDE DIRECTE-SIDA MONTREAL

David Crevier

J'ai eu l'agréable surprise de pouvoir mettre la main sur le dossier de presse d'une fondation très particulière, dont l'écho de ses bienfaits me sont parvenus par l'entremise d'un ami qui y travaille comme bénévole. FONDATION D'AIDE DIRECTE-SIDA MONTREAL fut enregistrée le 1er avril 1992. Michel Parenteau, président fondateur, suite au décès de plusieurs de ses proches et amis entrepris la mission de venir en aide aux personnes vivant avec le V.I.H.-Sida. Son désir était de mettre sur pied une fondation qui aiderait financièrement les personnes démunies atteintes du virus, pour qu'ils puissent maintenir une qualité de vie adéquate et conserver leur dignité.

L'une des principales difficultés dont les personnes atteintes font face, est la pauvreté soit causée par un arrêt de travail obligatoire ou par l'achat de médicaments aux coûts faramineux. Une grande majorité des personnes vivant avec le virus reçoivent des prestations d'aide sociale et avec l'achat des médicaments, ces personnes ne sont donc plus en mesure de pourvoir à leurs besoins essentiels. Nous savons tous que chez les personnes atteintes par le virus, le système immunitaire étant affaibli, une saine alimentation est essentielle pour conserver le système immunitaire au maximum de ses capacités. Un autre aspect important est l'hygiène (personnelle et domestique).

C'est ici qu'entre en jeu la FONDATION D'AIDE DIRECTE-SIDA MONTREAL.

Face à tous ces besoins, les personnes atteintes n'ont souvent plus d'autres alternatives que de se diriger vers les maisons d'hébergement. FONDATION D'AIDE DIRECTE-SIDA MONTREAL sollicite des dons, achète des produits d'hygiène et de nutrition. Ensuite, elle les redistribue aux personnes dans le besoin pour qu'ils puissent conserver leur domicile et leur autonomie le plus longtemps possible. La fondation possède un questionnaire que la personne doit remplir. Ce questionnaire permet une évaluation des besoins de la ou le requérant(e) des services. Ce qui permet un service spécialement adapté au besoin de la ou le requérant(e). Sur une base régulière, la fondation aide en moyenne 100 personnes par mois au coût de \$85.00 par personnes. Ces coûts sont divisés en 7 catégories: Viandes, Volailles, Produits laitiers, Fruits et Légumes, Hygiène (personnelles et domestique) et divers. Occasionnellement, la fondation vient en aide à la personne qui a des factures impayées liées au logement tel que loyer, hydro, gaz, électricité, etc. Le système de dépannage crée par la fondation a une clientèle très variée soit: homme célibataire, femmes et mères de familles, personnes autonomes, semi-autonomes, non-autonomes et certaines personnes appartenant à une minorité ethnique.

La fondation est un centre unique de dépannage dans le milieu du Sida; avec un projet de centralisation de ses services. Certains organismes fournissent à la fondation des produits alimentaires et

d'hygiène. D'autres, leurs référents des gens démunies qui peuvent profiter de leurs services, adaptés à leurs besoins. Les locaux de la fondation permettent:

- Espaces d'entreposage pour produits non-périssables
- Congélateur et réfrigérateur pour produits périssables
- Services de buanderie
- Espaces chaleureux pour recevoir les bénéficiaires
- Espaces à bureaux (administration des services)

Malgré son jeune âge, la fondation promet beaucoup et prévoit déjà offrir d'autres services pour mieux servir sa clientèle. Parmi les services à venir sont des visites à domicile, livraison, accroissement et variété des produits, une nutritionniste sur place, pour n'en nommer que quelques-uns. Avec l'ampleur que prend cette maladie à travers le monde il est primordial que des organismes tel la fondation puisse soutenir les personnes atteintes et leur donner un service personnalisé et une lueur d'espoir. Si vous avez un \$10 dollars de trop ou du temps libre, penser à la fondation. Je ne voudrais pas paraître pessimiste, mais un jour vous pourriez avoir recours à ses services.

Je tiens à remercier sincèrement Michel Parenteau et toute son équipe pour l'excellent travail qu'ils font. Chapeau.

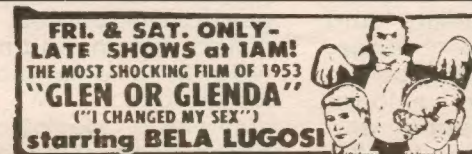
Pour toute correspondance, la fondation réside au:

1442, rue Panet  
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H2L 2Z1  
Téléphone: 522-1993  
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## Etre Coéditeur: un grand plaisir.

C'est avec un grand plaisir que du journal, tous particulièrement j'ai accepté le poste de Richard. coéditeur, pour me joindre à Nous rencontrons parfois des l'équipe formidable de Stala gens sur notre route dont Gavrielides et Aaron Pollard. l'énergie et le positivisme nous Grâce à leur détermination et déséquilibre tellement, qu'il nous leur confiance en ma personne, est impossible de rester assis sur "LETTERS FROM CAMP" se dirige, à nos laurier après cette son second numéro vers une rencontre. Ce saurai se donner publication bilingue. J'aimerais la mort dans l'âme. remercier tous ceux qui ont participé(es) au second numéro

David Crevier





# EDITORIALS

## Sappho ♀

Stala Gavrielides

Why is it that whenever I tell a dyke that I prefer the term Sapphic, I meet with bewilderment and utter ignorance? Could it be that very few of you have ever heard of Sappho, and if you have, you think she's out of some fairy tale. Or as one woman asked me: "Wasn't Sappho part of Greek mythology?" Well, just for all of you who still live in ignorance of who Sappho was and her significance to all dykes, I'm going to educate you.

Sappho lived at around 600 B.C., approximately 2600 years ago. Yes that was a long time ago, but dykes have been around since before the time of Christ! Sappho resided on Lesbos the largest of the Greek islands in the Aegean, with her daughter. Although Sappho revered the love between women above all others, and wrote of it in her poetry, belonging to the aristocratic class she

was obliged to marry when very young. From what little we do know about her life on Lesbos it seems she was apparently happily married. I should like to point out that being married, having sex with a man and giving birth **DO NOT CONSTITUTE BISEXUALITY** as many psychologists believe -- most lesbians have had

relationships with men at certain points in their lives, and still prefer to sleep with women. Given the period into which Sappho was born and her rank within society she had no say in whether or not to marry and to whom, thus she was forced to conform.

Over the centuries Sappho has become a legendary figure through the beauty and originality

**Over the centuries Sappho has become a legendary figure through the beauty and originality of her verse.**

of her verse. She and her contemporary, Alcaeus, who venerated her, were supreme among the Greek lyric poets. The largest repository of her work was situated at the Great Library of Alexandria which was destroyed by a fire during the reign of Cleopatra. Her name and reputation have survived in spite of the fact that only a few fragmentary poems, in addition to one completely preserved, are left to us. What little we do possess constitutes a mere five percent of her poetry.

Although her poetry, much like the love sonnets by Shakespeare, reflect sexual ambiguity, it is her poems to women that give touching expression to her feelings and reveal her art. Even the fragments that have survived are overwhelming

in their suggestive force. They reveal a profound depth of feeling, ranging from nostalgia to ecstasy. In his book *Sappho of Lesbos, her Works Restored*, Beram Saklatvala attempted to restore a number of her poems, but much of the nuance cannot be recaptured. The only poem which has survived intact is 'To the Girl Brachea' which I have reproduced in an effort to evoke the power of Sappho's verse and evoke her feelings for women.

In this poem she expresses a sensuous and emotional abandon in spite of the painful frustration and deprivation she feels at being denied Brachea. How many of us have felt the bitter sweet pain of unrequited love. Hers is a sophisticated love, an adoration of beauty, grace and charm. The emphasis of her poetry is on the sensuous power of aesthetic love -- one that overwhelms the senses and is accompanied by the bitter sweet ecstasy of the annihilation of the ego. This is the essence of 'Sapphic love'. So whether you call yourself a Dyke, Lesbian or a Sapphic that's what you are into.

### To the Girl Brachea

**Ah, in my mind he shares the high gods' fortune,  
And is their equal who may come beside you,  
And sit with you and your voice so lovely**

**Attend and listen.**

**And he may hear your laughter, love-awaking,  
Which makes my heart beat swiftly in my bosom.  
But when I see you, Brachea, O my voice**

**Fails me and falters.**

**And my tongue stumbles even when I glimpse at you  
Through all my flesh the fire swiftly running;  
My eyes see nothing, and my ears hear only  
My own pulse beating.**

**O then the sweat streams down me and I tremble  
In all my body. Pale as the grass I grow.**

**And Death itself, my strength and power fading,  
Seems to approach me.**

**So like a poor man I must be contented  
To worship from afar your golden beauty,  
To hear you laugh, and speak of all your loving  
Only to others.**

## Too Politically Correct?

Aaron Pollard

I am going to begin this editorial by making a statement that has been heard frequently as of late in classes, conferences, and meetings within and outside of queer communities: I am not Politically Correct. I would also like to make it perfectly clear that what I mean by the previous, very loaded statement is something very different from what most people mean when they say it. Most often the notion of "Political Correctness" is brought up after someone is made aware of how their activities are affecting the people around them; it is used as a way of retaliating when someone feels that they have been accused of contributing to the oppression of others. In these times of constantly shifting mores and economic instability it is not surprising to hear sentiment expressing futility and resistance to change. However it is disconcerting to find such a large number of people who choose, specifically, phrases declaring a distaste for "political

correctness" to describe their frustration with systems, language, or policies that are new to them or which they do not understand. I would like to stipulate that when I say, "I am not politically correct," I mean to say that I refuse to accept the term "politically correct" as a description of myself because it is a term that was invented to discredit my beliefs, my struggles and my very existence. It is a term that is meant to insight paranoia and xenophobia. It is an insidious and ingenious weapon invented by right wing fundamentalists and which took flight in North America during the Mulroney, Reagan, and Bush administrations. Most importantly, it is a term which effectively misrepresents reality. The notion, "Political Correctness" was put forth as an attack on civil rights activists, feminists, and environmentalists who - despite incredible obstacles - had begun to prompt small changes in government, business, the judicial system, and most notably in educational institutions. "P. C." connotes an ideologically based code of conduct and is used to describe ways in which the code is

"enforced." What the term "Politically Correct" fails to describe is the plurality of ideologies that circulate and develop within various civil rights movements. There is, for example, no single feminist approach to bringing about emancipation for women; rather, there are many feminisms working in various ways. Ironically, it often the sense of flux brought about by the diversity of opinions and strategies of civil rights activists that frustrates some people into crying P.C. This is why the use of term "political correctness" is so often inappropriate. People are ascribing a term which connotes a singular, static agenda to a vast landscape of changing and often contradictory opinions and ideals.

It is important to remember that the majority of laws controlling personal conduct in this society are based on a racist, heterosexist, male-supremacist paradigm. Even recent laws, brought about to protect minorities from continued discrimination tend to become subsumed within a system that is still rife with inequalities. The enforcement of recent legislation governing

pornography provides a good example of how the status quo perpetuates itself. Feminists who fought for anti-pornography legislation did so to put a stop to the massive exploitation of women and children within the pornography industry. However, law enforcement officers did not take the opportunity this law provided for cracking down on the industry moguls who make a fortune off of exploiting people and perpetuating societal taboos. Instead, customs officials and police used the laws to attack their traditional targets: They seized a feminist anti-porn film (Not a Love Story), queer literature, and artwork which deals with the effects of sexual abuse on children.

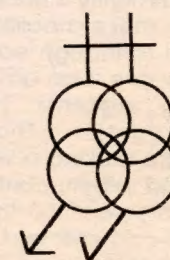
It is clear that making constructive change in our society does not end in new legislation. In order for change to be effective it must permeate all levels of society. There is a need for radical restructuring of our major institutions - be they governmental, business, judicial, or educational. As this restructuring occurs, new problems will arise making a difficult task seem even more

challenging. People of privilege (such as myself) have the choice of taking part in this challenge or of denouncing it as too difficult, too idealistic, or too politically correct.

## Editorial Note:

Issues of race, ethnicity and marginalization have come forth in many ways in this issue. We welcome responses and contributions to the issues raised. It is time for queer communities to address the discrimination that goes on within our circles.

**Stala Gavrielides  
Aaron Pollard  
Co-Editors.**





# Cinéma

## Philadelphia

Richard

**"Expliquez-moi cela comme si j'étais un enfant de deux ans"**

Joe Miller, dans  
"Philadelphia"

C'est avec cette phrase que Joe Miller (Denzel Washington) demande à son futur client, Andrew Beckett (Tom Hanks), de lui dire pourquoi il croit avoir été indûment renvoyé de sa position privilégiée dans une importante firme d'avocats. C'est avec cette phrase qu'il parviendra à soutirer en cour des confessions embarrassantes aux employeurs fautifs. Doit-on alors s'étonner que le scénariste de "Philadelphia", Ron Nyswaner, ait adopté cette approche pour transmettre son message aux masses dans ce premier film hollywoodien traitant du sida.

Andrew Beckett est un jeune et brillant avocat dont rien ne semble pouvoir arrêter l'ascension au sein de la meilleure étude légale de Philadelphie (comme elles le sont toujours toutes, au cinéma). Rien sauf sa maladie, qu'il cache tout autant que son homosexualité à ses patrons peut-être un peu trop conservateurs. Cette maladie qui progresse de façon de plus en plus visible et qui lui vaudra, peu de temps après une promotion, un coup monté le menant directement au chômage. Il cherchera donc à se faire défendre par Miller, avocat protecteur de la veuve et de l'orphelin, noir et... homophobe. Ayant d'abord refusé la cause, ce dernier se laissera éventuellement toucher par le drame de Beckett et ensemble ils monteront la poursuite judiciaire.

Il est difficile de nier les qualités de ce film. Soulignons d'abord la performance étonnante de Tom Hanks, nous rendant crédible ce

personnage d'homme malade, ayant accepté son sort inéluctable mais combattant tout de même pour mourir avec dignité. Ce qui aurait facilement pu tourner au mélodrame de second ordre demeure touchant de sobriété. Même s'il nous démontre à l'occasion les limites de ses capacités d'acteur (je pense à la scène où il tente de convertir "l'inculte" Miller, aux beautés de l'opéra), il est plus remarquable encore par les multiples moments où il nous révèle un talent jusqu'à présent insoupçonné. Il sait même utiliser le côté cabotin qu'on lui connaît bien pour conserver à Beckett sa dimension humaine et éviter d'en faire un martyr de la cause gaie au sida.

La réalisation experte de Jonathan Demme (Stop Making Sense, Silence of the Lambs) laisse elle aussi bien peu de place à la critique. Demme ne nous a par ailleurs jamais habitué à moins. Son utilisation nerveuse de la caméra, la multiplication des gros plans et des plans subjectifs nous tirent de l'indifférence, nous forcent à nous identifier aux divers personnages; à ressentir la douleur de Beckett, la crainte sidaphobe de Miller, tout autant que l'impressionnabilité des jurés face à des avocats loin d'être à cours d'astuces pour les influencer. Remarquable, cette scène où Miller apprend l'état de santé de son confrère, tant elle nous permet de vivre la réalité quotidienne des sidéens, nous confrontant aux préjugés dont ils sont victimes. La caméra suit le regard de l'avocat apeuré, ignorant les détails les plus fondamentaux de la transmission du virus VIH, alors qu'il prend mentalement note de chaque objet touché par ce dangereux monstre ayant osé s'infiltrer dans son petit monde jusque là bien protégé. Cette proximité, cette implication quasi directe dans un drame qui ne se déroule plus seulement sous nos yeux, mais aussi pour ainsi dire avec nos yeux, réussit plus que tout autre aspect du

film à nous faire oublier en partie les faiblesses d'un scénario croulant sous le poids de ses bonnes intentions.

Soucieux de ménager la chèvre et le chou (il s'agit après tout d'une importante - donc coûteuse - production), Nyswaner a concocté un script qui saura plaire à toutes les sensibilités. L'homophobie y est vertement dénoncée mais on évite toutefois soigneusement de la provoquer chez les spectateurs: on n'assiste en effet à aucune manifestation physique de l'amour unissant Beckett à son partenaire Miguel (Antonio Banderas), homme dont du reste on ignore tout. C'est à peine si on nous donne matière à croire en leur relation, si ce n'est un léger baisé à peine montré (durant lequel Hanks nous tourne d'ailleurs le dos...). Une grande variété de comportements gais y sont présentés, mais la féminité et le côté flamboyant de certains de leurs amis ne diminuent rien la virilité, la singulière normalité de notre couple central. C'est à croire qu'en voulant démontrer la diversité du monde homosexuel, on a choisi de mettre l'accent sur les attitudes les moins soi-disant offensantes pour la majorité des cinéphiles.

La vocation didactique du scénario prend trop souvent le pas sur l'histoire qu'on tente de nous raconter et c'est bien dommage; il en résulte certaines tirades pénibles d'évidence. Les rôles secondaires le demeurent hélas bel et bien; de grands noms (Jason Robards, Joanne Woodward, Mary Steenburgen) se trouvent réduits à interpréter des personnages unidimensionnels qui ne servent qu'à avancer des points d'information, à nous assener de grands coups de Vérité. On y apprend entre autres que l'homosexualité ne se devine pas à l'apparence, que le sida ne se transmet pas par une simple poignée de mains et que toutes ses victimes sont égales, pas plus innocentes les unes que les autres. À cela s'ajoute

l'in vraisemblance d'une famille totalement unifiée dans son support absolu des démarches juridiques éprouvantes et largement médiatisées de leur fils gay sidéen; exemplaire, sans aucun doute, mais peu crédible.

Malheureusement pour M. Nyswaner, lui-même homosexuel, nous ne sommes pas tous des enfants de deux ans, hétérosexuels et ignorants (pas que ces deux mots soient nécessairement synonymes, l'aurait-il oublié?). Et si Hollywood a mis dix ans à découvrir la réalité du sida, il m'apparaît quelque peu condescendant de sa part de croire qu'il en est ainsi du reste de la population.

Il était toutefois à prévoir qu'un premier effort des "majors" n'oserait s'aventurer sur des terrains moins prudents. Considérant l'importance des sommes investies dans un projet de cette envergure, nous sommes tous conscients de la nécessité de le rentabiliser afin de prouver la faisabilité d'un tel film et ainsi encourager la production d'une plus grande variété d'oeuvres sur ce thème. Il s'agissait donc pour un créateur, désireux de briser le tabou hollywoodien une fois pour toutes, d'éviter de s'aliéner les masses en proposant un sujet trop rébarbatif. Pour ce qui est du film racontant les malheurs d'un hétéro souffrant de la maladie à la suite de son refus de porter des condoms, il faudra savoir patienter.

Il reste à espérer que "Philadelphia" saura relever le défi et charmer les foules, sans quoi on ne pourra dire qu'il a rempli sa mission. Car malgré ses défauts, il n'en demeure pas moins un drame poignant, efficace et d'une importance politique capitale. À voir, si ce n'est que pour nous permettre d'en voir d'autres...

D'autre part, nous sera-t-il jamais donné la chance de revoir Tom Hanks avouant avoir commis des actes sexuels illicites dans un cinéma porno gay?

## Is CUSA's New Pub Really a Student Pub?

To: All Clubs and Associations

From: Concordia Queer Collective.

As we are all aware the new CUSA pub is getting ready to open. However, did you realize that a new policy is presently being formed that will govern when clubs and associations will be able to book this space. It has been rumoured that clubs and associations will NOT BE PERMITTED to book the new space on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. How can CUSA expect us to be able to raise our own funds if they will not permit us to use the pub when we want to. The Collective will not stand for this and we expect that other groups at Concordia will feel the same. Make your voices heard at CUSA and ensure that this rumour does not become policy.

James Edwards  
External Co-ordinator  
CQC

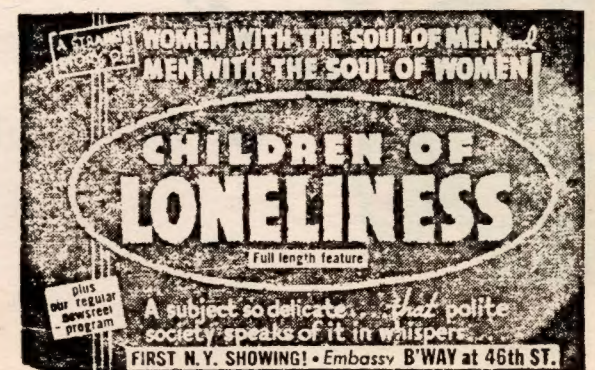
## MORE THAN JUST PEANUTS

Serena

EVER WONDER WHY MARCIE AND PATTY WERE BEST FRIENDS? AND WHY MARCIE NEVER SAID MUCH?



YOU JUST COULDN'T SEE WHAT SHE WAS SAYING.





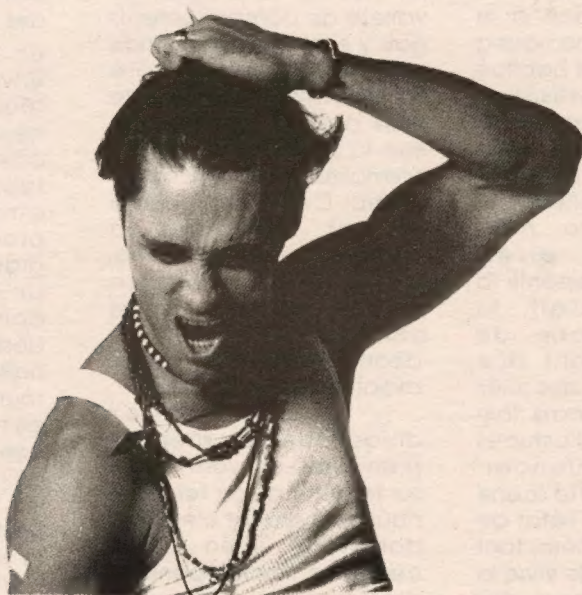
On Friday February 18,  
Concordia Queers are  
throwing a party at SKY

admission  
\$2.00

a benefit dance for  
*Letters from Camp*

# SASSY

Student Specials



Surprises!

# RIPE



Celebrate summer...

## SKY

1474 STE CATHERINE EST. 522-2475

four months early!





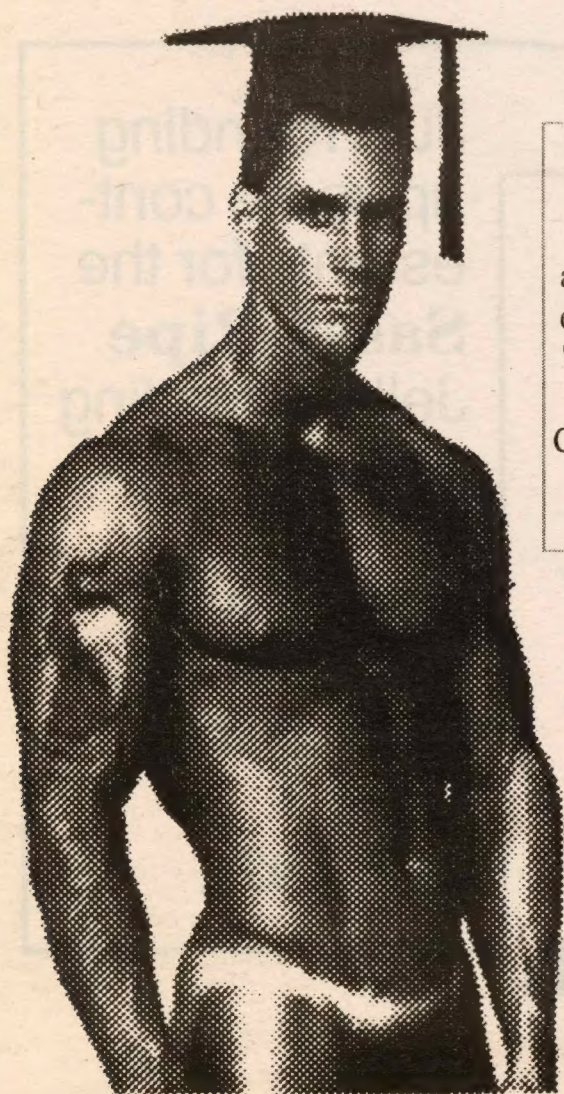


Robyn Goodfellow



Jeanne d'Arc

# EVERY FRIDAY, QUEER STUDENTS NIGHT



President of the Student Council, Buddy is 6 foot and 9 inches' with brown hair and blue eyes; always well dressed, which might explain why he is a salesperson at "Le Château". Amb: to become a professional masseur. Cher. Mem.: 'Disco Porno' Sundays at SKY. Fav.Ex: "Trust Sugar" "I gave him Nooch"

5 ft 6 inches, 110 pnds., Sylvie is the star player in her local baseball team. Her fingernails are usually dirty because of her part-time job at "Esso" gas station. Her dream: "spending time" with Liza Minelli and Martina Navratilova. Cher.Mem: Sex Lesbian Thursdays at SKY. K.D Lang concert 92'. Hobbys: Shaving and Deep sea diving.



## SKY

1474 STE CATHERINE EST.522-2475

**STUDENTS SPECIALS ALL NIGHT LONG**  
**ASK FOR YOUR CARD**



# calendar

**FEBRUARY 11**  
**CONCORDIA**  
**HIV & AIDS**  
**LECTURE SERIES**  
 "PUBLIC EDUCATION AND SOCIAL MARKETING"  
**DR. BEVERLY SCHWARTZ**  
 U.S. PUBLIC EDUCATOR  
 7PM, SENATE CHAMBER, DL-200  
 7141 SHERBROOKE ST W

**FEBRUARY 13**  
**[BADBOYCLUB]**  
**MEGA T-DANCE**  
 5pm-3am  
 Station "C"  
 (K.O.X. & Katakombes)

**FEBRUARY 11-13**  
**WYLD WOMYNS WEEKEND**  
 IN LACALLE  
 \$30/PERSON (INCLUDES TRANSPORTATION)  
 PHONE: 848-7414

**FEBRUARY 18:**  
**SASSY RIPE**  
 A BENEFIT DANCE FOR  
**LETTERS FROM CAMP**  
**AT SKY**  
 CELEBRATE SUMMER...FOUR MONTHS EARLY

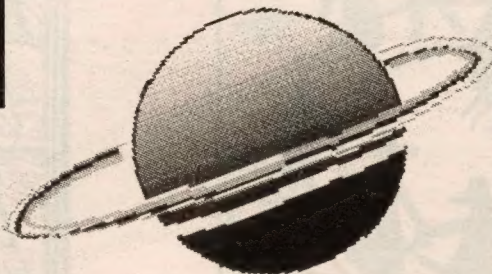
**FEBRUARY, MARCH, APRIL**  
**LETTERS FROM CAMP**  
 MEETINGS:  
 THURSDAYS  
 6:30PM  
 CQC OFFICE,  
 2020 MACKAY  
 P-102  
 JOIN IN ON  
 THE FUN!  
 THE THRILLS  
 THE CHILLS

**FEBRUARY, MARCH, APRIL**  
**CQC Meeting Schedule**  
 GENERAL MEETINGS:  
 1ST AND 3RD FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH,  
 CQC OFFICE, 2020 MACKAY, 5:30PM  
 DISCUSSION GROUPS:  
 2ND AND 4TH FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH,  
 CAMPUS MINISTRY - 2090 MACKAY, 6PM

Dear Dave,  
 Loved your sweet talk  
 but missed your bod.

## POP QUIZ:

- Advertisement for bridal gowns
- Marie Antoinette before her first cup of coffee
- An undercover MUC officer at a queer bar
- None of the above



Here's to the age of Capricorn. Climb on!



O - ma - gawd



Just rounding  
 up some cont-  
 estants for the  
**Sassy Ripe**  
 Jell-o wrestling  
 contest!

(To apply as  
 a contestant,  
 contact the  
 CQC  
 at P-102).